Sung rulers succumbed to the rising tide of foreign conquest and for nearly a century all China submitted to the Mongols. However, the latter did not seek to displace Chinese culture and ruled largely under the accustomed machinery and in the guise of Chinese Emperors, with the dynastic name of Yuan. Many foreigners entered China as merchants, soldiers, and officials. Western Europeans reached the Empire for the first time, most of them as merchants and missionaries, and carried back glowing report of the wealth and culture of Cathay. Novels and the theatre became prominent.

In the second half of the fourteenth century Chinese armies drove out the Mongols and one of their generals placed his family on the throne as a dynasty, the Ming, which ruled the Empire until the middle of the seventeenth century. The Neo-Confucianism of the Sung remained the official philosophy in which the educated were drilled and on which the state continued to be based. The administrative machinery and the civil service examinations which had come down from the Han were further elaborated aiid strengthened. Yet even the Ming, which sought so earnestly to restore the traditional culture, saw distinctive developments. Buddhism became more somnolent than ever, and art, deprived in part of its inspiration, grew more and more secular. Landscape painting declined in quality, but the technique of painting was elaborated. Porcelains were enriched by the use of more colors and polychrome designs. There was even a revolt (although affecting only a few) against the dominant Neo-Confucianism of the Sung, partly in the school of Wang Yang-ming and partly in the beginnings of the attempt to get back of the

interpretations of the Sung philosophers to the primitive documents of the accepted Classics as they had come from the hands of the Han editors.

In the seventeenth century the native Emperors gave way before another group of foreign conquerors. These, the Manchus, established the Ch'ing dynasty and held the throne until 1912, Under the rule of the greatest of the Ch'ing, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the territory controlled reached the widest extent in the history of the Empire. Population attained new high levels and the Chinese race spread over a larger area than ever before. In culture, however, the Ch'ing era was almost